

SCOTT WALKER – 30 CENTURY MAN PRODUCTION HISTORY

1990 I hear Scott Walker for the first time. Track: “The Old Man’s Back Again (Dedicated to the Neo-Stalinist Regime)” from the compilation “BOY CHILD: THE BEST OF 67-70” on Fontana Records, first time ever issued on CD.

1995 “Tilt”, first Scott Walker album in over a decade is released. By now, a Scott Walker obsessive, I love the record’s bleak, haunting, modernist soundscapes. Start dreaming of a Scott Walker film.

2001 Word is Scott Walker is thinking of heading back into the studio to make a new record. I somehow track down his manager’s contact details and fax a one-page idea for a film and start to do some preliminary research.

July 2001 Day before leaving for Berlin to edit my film “Cinemanía” I have coffee in NYC with a woman who is a friend of a friend of a guy who knows Bowie. An email is sent, a connection passed on, and I start pursuing David as the film’s Executive Producer.

September 2001 A break from editing “Cinemanía” I fly to London (a week after 9/11) to meet the Negus-Fancey’s, Scott’s managers and to chat people up in London about the project. I believe this is when I first met Graham Wood, founder of legendary design collective TOMATO, who agreed to do a series of animations for the film, being a lifelong Scott Walker fan himself.

September 2002 Having kept SW30 on the back-burner for the year while I toured around film festivals with “Cinemanía”, I meet with the first potential SW30 producing team in NYC, a pair of music-supervisors eager to move & groove in film production.

2003 Still caught up in the “Cinemanía” juggernaut, I manage to find the time to start pulling a “cast of characters” together, Jarvis, Marc Almond, some of the usual suspects...and I get a firm commitment from Bowie to participate.

January 23, 2003 In London for a few days on my way to the Rotterdam Film Festival, I go to pitch the film to The Film Consortium and meet with Mia Bays, their head of marketing and distribution. She’s a fan of “Cinemanía” and while Film Consortium can’t get involved in the project, we stay in touch.

I start talking the film up during Rotterdam, and meet the producer of the documentary feature “Body Song” who eventually introduces me to her music supervisor Tanya Sweeney, who had commissioned the “Body Song” score from Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood. Tanya will become instrumental in wrangling the artists who took part in the film.

February 23, 2003 At Joe’s Pub in NYC attending a performance of “David Driver sings The Scott Walker Songbook” I meet long-time fan Claudia Hall, mother of two teenaged sons and Scott fan since girlhood, who becomes my first real deep source for Scott W archive material.

May 2003 During a drunken after-party during the Tribeca Film Festival I am introduced to “a guy from *Sex in the City*” who is actually actor Gale Harold from “Queer as Folk”. Over several whiskey’s we talk about rock music and he confesses to being a big Scott Walker fan. About a week later, he provides the film with it’s first seed money, yet Scott hadn’t started recording yet and I had drifted apart from the first team of “producers” and drifted into a period of “development” that involved a lot of waiting and waiting and waiting....

March 2004

Another round of meetings in London to further solidify support for the project including meeting with Chris Sharp for the first time, CEO of 4AD records who have just signed Scott to a record deal. I also continue to meet with Scott's managers and talk through ideas for the film. A diary entry shows a night out on the town with "Mia Bays and friends" – Mia had since left The Film Consortium and started her own production company, Missing in Action Films. Whether it happened over drinks in March or a few months later, we evolve from drinking buddies into bona fide producing partners.

June 2004 During a trip to LA, I run into an old friend at a restaurant in Venice, Chris Paine. He's just produced a film called "Faster" shot by Grant Gee, the guy who made the Radiohead film "Meeting People is Easy". I'd been trying to get a hold of Grant with an idea to have him work with me shooting the film. Chris shoots him an email that afternoon and the connection is made at last.

October 1, 2004

I get word from his managers that Scott has booked some sessions at Metropolis Studios in London, so with what is left of our "seed money", I jet off to London to see what we can manage to film.

Oct.- Dec 2004

I meet with Grant for the first time and he signs on to shoot, along with his favored ace sound recordist Rash Omar.

While waiting for the okay to film Scott Walker at work we round up a handful of interviews: Radiohead was first, followed by Johnny Marr, and then Simon Raymonde, Rob Ellis (avant-garde composer and a frequent collaborator with PJ Harvey) and Alison Goldfrapp.

We get the call to film Scott at work at Metropolis Studio. It is to be a day of percussion. We film the Box, the Pipe, the Trash Can and The Meat.

Graham Wood delivers his first animated sequence, "Boy Child" and, huddled down in Grant's house in Brighton, we edit our first 8 min. promotional clip of the film. I return to NYC and we get down to trying to raise the funds to shoot the rest of the film.

While we had lots of interest from various factions at the BBC and elsewhere, Scott Walker was considered high-risk. Several producers over the years had attempted to get a film about Scott made with no success. People were skeptical about him ever delivering a new album, and about our ability to actually get the elusive artist on film, despite our having already spent a day in the studio with him. The question remained – would we get an interview and the continued access we needed to create a compelling film? Even we weren't sure.

We had to forge on independently, try to keep the project afloat and find the financial support to see it through.

March 2005 I am alerted that Scott has booked a session at Air Studio in London to record strings for the new album. Our funds depleted, we have to be creative. Turns out, even if we had the budget, to film a union string player at work in the UK costs something in the neighborhood of £85/hour per player. And he was employing a 40-piece orchestra. Plus royalties. Impossible.

Unable to make the trip myself, Grant Gee attends the session with a digital camera and lurks about snapping still photographs, which were later edited in to an incredibly dynamic sequenced dramatizing the down-to-the-wire session.

June 2005 I attended the Provincetown Film Festival, organized by my old friend Andrew Peterson. I show him our 8 min. promo reel and he mentions a woman who had been at the

festival the previous day expressing interest in financing documentaries. What sounded like the longest-of-long shots turns out to be the real deal – but I wasn't to know that quite yet. Word goes out to this Mystery Woman and over the next few months I wait...

On the way back from Provincetown I stop at my folks, who live there on Cape Cod. On or about the 22nd I get the call: David Bowie is ready for us to do The Interview. Vacation cut short – I head back to NYC immediately to prep.

June 30, 2005. Shoot David Bowie interview, Soho House, New York. I cut selects of that into our promo reel and hit the streets again, trying to raise our production financing.

July 2005 A week of meetings in London & Dublin with Mia. We show the promo around to various parties, Scott's managers, 4AD, Verve Pictures (who will eventually sign on to distribute the film in the UK), and while having drinks in Dublin with Se Merry Doyle & Martina Durac of Loopline Films, who will eventually help us with some of our Dublin interviews, we meet filmmaker Jim Sheridan and family at the corner pub. He confesses a love of Scott Walker but, alas, we weren't able to talk him into appearing in the film.

During this time the Mystery Woman from Provincetown turns out to be Elizabeth Rose from San Diego. She had been sent our proposal via email and requested to view our promotional reel.

August 3, 2005 Liz is impressed by our pitch and our reel. I go to San Diego to meet her and discuss the project. Liz signs on to help finance the film and joins the SW30 team. And with Scott about to enter the final phase of recording his new album, not a moment too soon!

September 2005 PRINCIPLE PHOTOGRAPHY COMMENCES. I start with Ed Bicknell, Richard Hawley and Sting all on the same day at a room at Air Studio on September 15. We are off and running!

November 2005 Early November we attend the AFM in LA and I shoot off to interview Angela Morley, (born Wally Stott) in Scottsdale, AZ, the legendary string arranger of some of Scott Walker's finest moments from the 60's, last living of the four arrangers who crafted Scott's lush and surreal orchestrations, so this was an incredible day.

Back in London, we are granted one final audience with Scott Walker in Metropolis Studio.

January 2006 Back in NYC following the holidays, I get my first listen to Scott Walker's new album "The Drift". With this last piece of Scott's creative puzzle in place, the edit of the film starts to take shape in my head. Plans are made to return to the UK to conduct the final interviews (with Scott) and begin the edit.

February 21, 2006 Scott Walker Interview #1. Conducted as a conversation with colleague David Sefton, it turns out a bit too conversational, not informative enough to really fill in all the gaps. The tone is nice, but it's almost too laid back, just two old friends having a chat. We request a second interview...

April 20, 2006 Scott Walker Interview #2.

We take a week to cut a sample of our new material into more promotional DVDs to take with us to Toronto where we have been selected to participate in the HotDocs Pitch Forum, a round-table pitch session for works-in-progress that introduces your work to commissioning editors and buyers from around the world.

May 2006. Our sales agents start to introduce the project at Cannes, screening out 3 min. trailer to selected buyers. We continue to edit during what will become an unusually long, hot summer...

August 2006 With the film in rough-cut form and a few test-screenings behind us, we have hit a wall with the edit – both creatively and physically – Grant and editor Jerry have a big job coming through but we can't slack the pace now.

We are introduced to editor Mat Whitecross, fresh off of co-directing and co-editing "Road to Guantanamo" with Michael Winterbottom. A die-hard Bob Dylan fan, he has never heard Scott Walker, but is up to the challenge. Now we have a fresh pair of eyes on the project and a new edit suite, a closet-sized room in Mat's office right on Frith Street in the heart of Soho. Not that I minded commuting down to Brighton or out to Clapham Junction where Jerry cuts, but it is a distinct pleasure to start the day with a latte at Bar Italia.

The cut continues.

September 20, 2006 We are a day or so away from picture lock. We record the voice-over narration with the inimitable Sara Kestelman.

October 2006 The beginning of the month sees the final post-production process commence: picture lock, grading, sound-mix, layback...

October 31, 2006 "Scott Walker – 30 Century Man" World Premieres at the BFI 50th London Film Festival to two sold-out audiences. An invitation to premiere internationally at the Berlin International Film Festival in the Panorama soon follows...

Festivals to follow include:

SXSW

Thessaloniki Doc Fest

NatFilm Festival, Denmark

Hong Kong International Film Festival

HotDocs, Canadian International Documentary Festival

And more...

With a UK Theatrical release planned for late April 2007.